

military forces on Earth. Like the Macabees, Israel has defended itself bravely against enemies seeking its destruction. And today, Israel is a light unto the nations and one of America's closest friends.

This evening we have the great privilege of celebrating Israel's 60th anniversary and Hanukkah in a very special way. Thanks to the generosity of the Truman Library, we are fortunate to light the menorah presented to President Truman in 1951 as a symbol of friendship by Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion.

A decade after President Truman received this gift, he visited Prime Minister Ben-Gurion for one of the last times. As they parted, Ben-Gurion told the President that as a foreigner he could not judge President Truman's place in American history, but the President's courageous decision to recognize the new State of Israel gave him an immortal place in Jewish his-

tory. Those words filled the President's eyes with uncharacteristic tears. And later, Ben-Gurion would say he rarely had seen somebody so moved.

And so tonight I'm deeply moved to welcome the grandsons of these two great men—Clifton Truman Daniel and Yariv Ben-Eliezer—to light the Truman menorah together.

Laura and I wish all the people of Jewish faith a happy Hanukkah and many joyous Hanukkahs in the years ahead. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:30 p.m. in the Grand Foyer at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Jalal Talabani of Iraq; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; Susan Mukasey, wife of Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey; and entertainers Kol Zimra. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With President Elias Antonio Saca Gonzalez of El Salvador

December 16, 2008

*President Bush.* Mr. President, *benvenido de nuevo*. I am honored to have you back. I appreciate your friendship, and I appreciate your strong leadership for the people of our close ally, El Salvador.

We've had a very good discussion. First, I want to thank you for your support of freedom in Iraq. You and—have been steadfast in recognizing that freedom is the way to help build lasting peace.

I appreciate very much the fact that your country is a vibrant democracy. You've been steadfast in your support for your—the right of your people to express themselves in a free society, and I applaud you for that strength.

I want to thank you very much for investing in your people. You're a—we've got a partnership through the Millennium

Challenge Corporation. And part of your commitment was honest government and the investment in the health and education of your people. And you've honored that agreement. I thank you very much for understanding that the benefits of trade are good for your people and our people as well. And you're a very strong advocate of CAFTA, which is working very well.

And finally, you've been very strong when it comes to helping interdict the flow of drugs. I explained to the President that since 2001, drug use in the United States amongst teenagers has declined by 25 percent. And the reason I said that is because in order to affect the flow of drugs there must be a comprehensive approach. First of all, we got to—we in the United States must reduce demand. But it also requires

a strong cooperative spirit to interdict supply. And you have been very strong in that.

And so I thank you. It's been a pleasure to work with you. You may have heard that I'm about to retire. And as I head toward the great State of Texas, I will have very fond memories of our time together and the strength of our friendship and of your leadership.

So welcome.

*President Saca Gonzalez. Muchas gracias.*

*President Bush. Si.*

*President Saca Gonzalez.* Thank you so much. I also thank President Bush. I think that we have got a very fruitful relationship and one that is very concerned for our people. I think that El Salvador is a good example of a country that moved from war to peace. And we've always had the contribution of the United States in all of the stages of this peace.

I always tell President Bush that free trade was so important, as well as the immigration issue for our people. And all these issues have been worked out, especially regarding cooperation with regards to the combat against drugs. I have confirmed President Bush that El Salvador is going to renew the FOL that we have at the Pacific coast. And that has allowed us to capture a lot of drug traffickers and seize a lot of drugs also for the Pacific coast.

So a mid-income country like El Salvador knows perfectly well that the path towards prosperity is effort and hard work and freedom. And this is something that Salvadorans practice on a daily basis. We have worked hand in hand with ILEA. And ILEA is the place where our judges and our prosecutors are being trained, and it is something that we're doing together with the United States of America.

With regards to the Millennium account, we have been very successful. We're working very fast. We're going to build a highway, a 300-kilometer-long highway in the northern part of the country. And at the same time, we're going to develop the rural areas along that highway. And all this has

been done hand in hand with the United States.

I wish you the best of luck in your new life. I was just in Dallas recently, because I went to promote the TPS for our people. And everybody knew there that President Bush was going to move to Dallas. [*Laughter*]

You are leaving on January 20. And I leave on the 1st of June.

*President Bush. Si. [Laughter]*

*President Saca Gonzalez.* So I hope that I can go and visit you and talk to you—

*President Bush. Por cierto, por cierto.*

*President Saca Gonzalez. Lo damos por cierto.*

*President Bush. Si.*

*President Saca Gonzalez.* Okay. President Bush has been a strong advocate of freedom. And I think that the United States has much to thank President Bush, especially the fact that the U.S. has not been attacked again by the terrorist groups. This is something quite intangible, because you cannot touch it, you cannot feel it, until that, unfortunately, something like that would happen again.

You can always count with the support of El Salvador on these issues, Mr. President, and the United States in general, the new President, because the historical relationship between the United States of America and El Salvador is a relationship of shared values, and we will continue to share in this friendship strongly, as it is now.

Thank you so much.

*President Bush* Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:07 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Saca Gonzalez referred to President-elect Barack Obama; FOL, the U.S. Military Forward Operating Location in Comalapa, El Salvador; ILEA, the Department of Homeland Security's International Law Enforcement Academies; and TPS, temporary protected immigration status. President Saca Gonzalez spoke in Spanish, and his remarks

were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders on Reporting on the Deployments of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces Around the World *December 16, 2008*

*Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

I am providing this supplemental consolidated report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93-148), as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about deployments of U.S. combat-equipped Armed Forces around the world. This supplemental report covers operations in support of the war on terror and in Kosovo.

### **THE WAR ON TERROR**

Since September 24, 2001, I have reported, consistent with Public Law 107-40 and the War Powers Resolution, on the combat operations in Afghanistan against al-Qaida terrorists and their Taliban supporters, which began on October 7, 2001, and the deployment of various combat-equipped and combat-support forces to a number of locations in the Central, Pacific, European, Southern, and Africa Command areas of operation in support of those operations and of other operations in our war on terror.

I will direct additional measures as necessary in the exercise of the right of the United States to self-defense and to protect U.S. citizens and interests. Such measures may include short-notice deployments of special operations and other forces for sensitive operations in various locations throughout the world. It is not possible to know at this time the precise scope or the duration of the deployment of U.S. Armed

Forces necessary to counter the terrorist threat to the United States.

United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous coalition partners, continue to conduct the U.S. campaign to pursue al-Qaida terrorists and to eliminate support to al-Qaida. These operations have been successful in seriously degrading al-Qaida's training capabilities. United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous coalition partners, ended the Taliban regime and are actively pursuing and engaging remnant al-Qaida and Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. The total number of U.S. forces in Afghanistan is approximately 31,000, of which approximately 13,000 are assigned to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. The U.N. Security Council authorized ISAF in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1386 of December 20, 2001, and has reaffirmed its authorization since that time, most recently for a 12-month period from October 13, 2008, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1833 of September 22, 2008. The mission of ISAF under NATO command is to assist the Government of Afghanistan in creating a safe and secure environment that allows for continued reconstruction and the exercise and extension of Afghan authority. Currently, more than 40 nations contribute to ISAF, including all 26 NATO Allies.

The United States continues to detain several hundred al-Qaida and Taliban fighters who are believed to pose a continuing threat to the United States and its interests. The combat-equipped and combat-support